



Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Thomas Warren Field

Elementary School K299

**88 Woodbine Street
Brooklyn, NY 11221**

Principal: Wilma Kirk

Dates of review: December 3-4, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Lillian Druck

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Thomas Warren Field is an elementary school with 382 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 52% Black, 47% Hispanic and 1% other students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 90.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school works cohesively to establish a respectful, caring environment that promotes adult learning and enhances students' academic and personal growth. (1.4)
 - A wide range of structures ensure a safe and inclusive culture that supports student and adult learning. The Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) is the driving force that sets the positive school culture and promotes the code of conduct: "Be present, be prompt, be prepared, be polite and be productive." PBIS incorporates incentives and tangible rewards such as "eagle dollars" and special recognition of classes that motivate students to succeed and engage in their learning. The PATHS Program (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) provides curriculum kits, lessons, posters and various learning resources that foster uniform classroom practices and routines. The Recess Enhancement Program provides the school with the services of an external play coach who engages students in organized games and physical activities, while modeling effective large group management strategies that school aides replicate during outdoor recess. As a result, students play games and are safe in the playground following the respective lunch periods while under the direction of trained school staff. The SAPIS (Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialist) worker meets with the student advisory council to coordinate voluntary activities that students participate in during the school day. Such activities include peer tutoring in early grades and assisting with morning line-up. Students take pride in highlighting the school's motto, "I believe I can score a Level 3 or 4. Like an eagle I will soar!" as part of daily morning announcements, and state that their voice is welcomed and valued by their peers and the staff. The combination of these effective strategies and the collaborative efforts of staff, students and families greatly contribute to a productive learning environment and a positive school culture. This is reflected across the school through student and staff interactions observed during classroom visits and noted in the data which shows fewer than five behavior-related incidents reported on the On-line Occurrence Reporting System (OORS).
 - The SAPIS worker and guidance counselor conduct assembly programs on topics such as self-esteem, decision-making and assertiveness, which promote life skills and offer conflict resolution strategies. The SAPIS worker and guidance counselor meet with small groups of students to address behavioral issues and improve self-respect and confidence. They create child-friendly personal goals aligned with students' learning needs and help students track their progress in meeting these goals. For example, one student shared that he learned to stop and think before reacting to peers' actions and another student stated that being part of small group activities helped her learn to take turns when playing with others. The family worker collaborates with the attendance committee and reaches out to families to ensure students come to school every day. These coordinated efforts result in improved attendance from 90.6% in June to 92.7% from the start of the school year through November as noted in the school's ATS attendance summary reports.

- School leaders convey high expectations that support learning so that students and faculty achieve success in meeting their goals. (3.4)
 - The Danielson Framework for Teaching is used to communicate high expectations related to preparation and planning, learning environment, professionalism and classroom instruction. Professional development conducted through faculty conferences, grade meetings and teacher team collaborations offer opportunities to discuss the expectations across the four domains of the teaching framework. Feedback from supervisors following visits to classrooms and conversations with teachers promote accountability for the expectations. The staff handbook, distributed at the start of the school year, highlights the citywide instructional expectations and emphasizes the importance of preparing youngsters for college and career readiness. As a result, teachers are well aware of the school's goals to enhance classroom instruction and accelerate student learning as noted in teacher team conversations and improved practices in planning and preparation measured by the teacher effectiveness rubric.
 - Parent workshops, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and sessions on topics such as "Common Core Standards: Shifts for Students and Parents" and the presentation of Common Core performance tasks by grade, communicate expectations to families connected to college and career readiness. During PTA meetings, the principal provides parents with resources from Engage NY to help them understand the Common Core assessments. A brochure distributed to families at the start of the school year, outlines programs and activities that the school offers to support college and career readiness. For example, Music and the Brain, Technology Residency and a Cultural After School Arts (CASA) grant engage students in Common Core aligned learning activities that integrate technology and the arts. Other activities such as Career Day, Science Fair, and cultural celebrations promote college and career readiness skills. A parent room is set up with a lending library for students and adults to promote reading and encourage participation in the education process. The principal, PTA executive board members, parent coordinator and staff provide information sessions to help families understand their children's progress toward meeting the school's expectations. In addition, progress reports provide families with information about their children's growth in meeting grade benchmarks. Therefore, families understand what their children need to accomplish to be successful at their next level of learning and fully support the school's efforts in preparing their children for college and career readiness as noted in more than 90% parents indicating high levels of satisfaction in the school survey.

- School leaders evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices with a clear focus on promoting professional growth and reflection, thereby impacting classroom instruction. (4.1)
 - Teachers and administrators participated in the Teacher Effectiveness Program (TEP) last year. This experience provided opportunities to work with an external coach in using the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric as a tool to support teacher development through clear expectations for classroom practice and feedback to improve student

learning. All teachers received immediate feedback following the first cycle of supervisory visits to classrooms as noted in dated evaluator forms from supervisors regarding the effectiveness of instructional practices. Some of the feedback to teachers includes time-bound recommendations that inform them of their progress in meeting expectations related to their pedagogical skills and professional growth. For example, following the analysis of observation data, supervisors identified competency 3B, using questioning and discussion as an area requiring additional support. Feedback to individual teachers encouraged the use of specific ARIS resources, such as Learning Opportunities #124 and # 450, to expand strategies that extend and enrich discussion in the classroom. Supervisors also engaged in class visits to observe close reading strategies and multiple entry points in lessons. These visits sharpened administrators' and teachers' lens around the two areas identified as the school's instructional focus and culminated in the creation of an intervisitation schedule and co-planning sessions specific to close reading strategies and multiple entry points in lessons. Consequently, feedback aligned to the Danielson rubric, as well as, intervisitations and collaborative team planning sessions promote teacher development, resulting in improved classroom practice and positively impacting daily instruction as noted in increased, effective ratings captured through the teaching framework rubric.

- The school ensures alignment of curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and offers meaningful learning experiences that promote rigor to improve student learning. (1.1)
 - The school uses Common Core aligned Ready Gen English language arts and Go Math programs to ensure coherence and attention to the instructional shifts across grades. Teacher teams engage in planning lessons, unpacking the new English language arts and math programs and identifying areas that require further adjustments for English language learners and special education students. For example, teachers engage students in “chunking reading” or breaking up complex texts into smaller units to reinforce comprehension and promote higher order thinking skills. As part of planning the literacy program, “team talk” writing activities connected to standards are incorporated into units of study, requiring students to write opinion pieces on topics supporting a point of view with reasons and information. For example, in fourth grade, students had the choice of responding to one of three questions planned following the reading of an anchor text titled, “Skeletons Inside and Out.” A summary of the data for one of the classes indicated that 65% of the students scored at Levels 3 and 4, as measured by common performance assessment rubrics. Therefore, students participate in a rich, coherent curriculum and rigorous performance-based tasks that promote college and career readiness skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance shared assessment practices so that information on learning outcomes results in effective adjustments to instruction with clear next learning steps for students to accelerate their learning. (2.2)

- Teachers use common assessments such as, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Ready Gen performance tasks, Go Math unit tests and rubrics aligned to the school's curriculum to measure student progress and gain information about student learning outcomes. Student work posted on bulletin boards and in folders includes teacher feedback regarding student writing. However, although feedback is actionable, it does not always provide detailed reasons indicating why students were successful or offer helpful next steps for improvement in their learning. Some feedback, for example, "correct your spelling and write neater," is not meaningful in that it does not help students understand what they need to do to make progress toward meeting their specific learning needs. As a result, some students are not clear on what they need to do to guide their improvement, thereby limiting their potential to progress academically.
- Teachers use checklists to gather information about students' progress during lessons. In one classroom, students used color-coded cards at their desks stating "I'm working fine" or "I need help" to communicate their understanding of the lesson. Some student work includes self reflections and comments from peers regarding writing artifacts. However, the information gathered from checklists and self assessments, is not always used to make targeted adjustments to meet the specific learning deficits of subgroups, including English language learners and special education students. This limits teachers' ability to make strategic and purposeful modifications to lessons to meet the immediate learning needs of all students and accelerate their learning.
- Refine the use of teaching strategies that strategically embed multiple entry points so that academic tasks further challenge all learners and result in meaningful work products that reflect student ownership. (1.2)
 - Lessons include graphic organizers, manipulatives, translations in Spanish, and student groupings including partnerships, to provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all learners. However, in some classrooms, strategic scaffolds and high quality lesson extensions to push thinking and broaden the learning experiences of some students, particularly English language learners and special education students, are not fully embedded. In addition, although translations are provided for English language learners in some classrooms, these consist mostly of verbal, procedural explanations lacking academic vocabulary and cognitive language for students to work to their full potential and maximize their learning. As a result, some students are not always fully motivated to participate in discussions that foster high levels of thinking and promote ownership of their learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Thomas Warren Field	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?		X					
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed